

VZCZCXRO4117
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHAM #0424 0410949
ZNY SSSS ZZH
P 100949Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1749
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0854
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1889

S E C R E T AMMAN 000424

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2018

TAGS: EG IS JO KWBG LE PREL

SUBJECT: A/S WELCH DISCUSSES PEACE PROCESS, GAZA, LEBANON
WITH GID DIRECTOR AND ROYAL COURT CHIEF

REF: AMMAN 394

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: In a February 6 meeting with Mohammed Dahabi, head of the General Intelligence Department (GID), NEA A/S David Welch discussed the peace process, Gaza, and Lebanon. Dahabi's reading of the Gaza situation was that it was a victory for Hamas. On the Annapolis process, Dahabi doubted Mahmoud Abbas' ability to deliver on security. Dahabi and, in a separate meeting, Royal Court Advisor Bassem Awadallah, spoke of Jordanian efforts to shore up the Siniiora government and move towards a solution to the Lebanon crisis.

End Summary.

¶2. (S/NF) Dahabi led off by reviewing his recent meeting with Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, who was "furious" about the situation in Gaza. Dahabi posited that the recent border incident plays to the advantage of Hamas (in contrast to the view of Foreign Minister Salaheddin Al-Bashir - Ref A) and that Israel must understand the importance of not creating humanitarian problems in Gaza. Per Dahabi, his Egyptian counterpart advocates dialogue with Hamas, but he disagrees that such a discussion would be productive. Dahabi said the Saudis are still looking to revive the Mecca Accord, or walk away altogether from the Palestinian issue.

¶3. (S/NF) Speaking about the Annapolis process, Dahabi put forth his doubts on the ability of Mahmoud Abbas to deliver on security issues. He posited that without economic reforms that lift the standard of living in the Palestinian territories, fundamental progress on security measures will remain elusive. He also said progress on the ground was needed to prove Israel's commitment to a two-state solution. Welch responded that General Jones and Lieutenant General Dayton are on task, but that progress on the ground and in the arena of public opinion is still needed. He maintained that Jordan must remain engaged in the process, and serve as a bridge for other Arab countries to engage with the Israelis and convince them to stay on task.

¶4. (S/NF) On Lebanon, Welch reminded Dahabi that the Arab League approach on the issue has yet to produce a president, and that Arab states will need to step up their efforts if a majority-friendly deal is to be brokered. Dahabi said Syria does not care about attendance at the Arab Summit because it does not believe it needs support. Asad was, however, trying to weaken some of the old guard around him (and had appointed a non-Alawite as chief of general intelligence).

¶5. (S/NF) In a separate meeting, Royal Court Chief Bassem Awadallah spoke about his recent trip to Kuwait, during which

he advocated for more financial support for the Siniora government, and said he would do so in Saudi Arabia soon. Awadallah also confirmed that Walid Jumblatt has been invited to Jordan.

¶6. (U) A/S Welch cleared this cable.
HALE